Design Resource

Bamboo Root Carving - Agartala, Tripura

Bamboo Sculptures
by
Prof. Bibhudutta Baral
NID, Bengaluru

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/bamboo-root-carving-agartala-tripura

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
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Introduction

On the bank of the Haora River, Agartala is one of the fastest developing cities in India. Agartala, the capital of Tripura and also is the second-largest city in North-east India after Guwahati, both in municipal area and population. Agartala is renowned for its Cane and bamboo crafts. The handicrafts of Tripura are unique and attractive. Tripuri has a skillful boon to create incomparable handicrafts. Their products are famous in and outside of Tripura.

The foundation of forming patterns through bamboo has emerged from the rural communities of this state. In modern times, bamboo crafts have massive demand in both domestic and international markets. Tripura is the state that uses the most bamboo products. Bamboo carving is also known as bamboo sculpture. The bamboo root carvings decorate in various furnishings such as a human sculpture, animals, and decorative items that enjoy high value. Bamboo products are eco-friendly and light in weight. They have their style and elegance. These products have a high life, which requires minimum maintenance.

Bamboo strips are widely used to making different utility and decorative items. The artisans' skilled hands weave bamboo jewelry, photo frames, lampshades, trays, and baskets. Bamboo is very useful and widely used for everyday purposes in rural areas of Tripura. Bamboo carving is a process in which some tools are used to shape something creative from bamboo roots. Artist scraps away unwanted portions of bamboo roots to give birth to his creativity. Bamboo carving a tradition carried forward from generation to generation. In this resource master craftsman, Mr. Amar showcasing how elegantly he carves on bamboo roots.

The sculpture of small Rhinoceros has made from the bamboo root.

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Mr. Amar is the senior craftsman of Bamboo root carving products.

The small artificial hut.

The craftsman is showing the bamboo roots.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials that are used for bamboo root carving are:

- **Bamboo:** The essential raw material for making the craft.
- **Carving Tools:** It is used for carving bamboo.
- **Glue:** It is used for joining parts and embellishments.
- **Knife:** It is used in splitting, cutting, and slicing the bamboo.
- **Pen/ Marker:** It is used for making designs on bamboo.

A set of tools used for bamboo root carving.

Carving tools and sandpaper kept in a bamboo box.

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The bamboo roots.

Carving tools and hammer are used to cut the edges.

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The pencil is used to draw shapes on the bamboo root.

A drilling machine is used for the carving process.

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Cutting plier is used to cut the extra roots.

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Making Process

Craftsman Mr. Amar is carving bamboo roots and making sculptures for the last twenty years. He learned this art on his own. He can make so many things from bamboo. Like from big sculptures to miniature tribal models, animals, etc. He uses his creative mind to make things from the simple bamboo root. The chisels of different sizes are used for making bamboo craft. The process begins with the selection of bamboo root. He uses the bamboo itself as an inspiration. He starts with a form already in his mind and carves on bamboo to accomplish his vision. The craftsman begins by forming a model, sometimes sketching the shape of the statue on paper or drawing a general outline of the figure on the bamboo root itself. Then begins the roughing out stage where he usually begins by knocking off large portions of unwanted bamboo. The fine detailing is made by using a sharp knife, chisel, and hammer. Lastly, the final stage of the carving process is polishing. The sandpaper can be used as a first step in the polishing process with sandpaper or a filer. Then clothes and other decorative materials are used for embellishments.

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The craftsman is taking the bamboo roots for making the craft.

Craftsman uses the carving knife to remove the unwanted portion of bamboo.

The craftsman is using the flat chisel on the bamboo surface for giving a proper shape.

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The bamboo root shaping in the process.

After giving basic shape, he checks for further detailing.

The body parts like eyes, nose, face is drawn with the help of a pencil.

He is carving by drawing guidelines.

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Minute carving in process.

After finishing the clothes and other decorative materials are used for embellishments.

Beautifully carved tribal woman from the bamboo tree root.

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Products

The availability of bamboo is more in Agartala; therefore, local people using dry bamboo biomass as firewood for cooking purposes. A creative thought came to Mr. Amar, a master craftsman, to make some objects from bamboo. He has learned to make bamboo craft on his own. After a lot of research and efforts, he makes these handicrafts. He is the only person in his village who can create beautiful artifacts from bamboo. He produces a variety of models based on the requirements of the customers. He also makes toys, small crafts, and many more products from bamboo. The time and patience required for making smaller objects are more compared to the bigger ones.

Rhinoceros are made from bamboo roots.

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A tribal man.

An older man holding a stick in his hand.

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The monkey face is carved in bamboo roots.

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Contact Details

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